

FAQs About PACE® and PCCE™

PACE® ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Minimum of 4 years of substantive paralegal experience obtained on or before December 31, 2000; or
2. Associate's degree in paralegal studies obtained from an institutionally accredited and/or ABA approved paralegal education program AND at least 6 years of substantive paralegal experience; or
3. Bachelor's degree in any course of study AND at least 3 years of substantive paralegal experience; or
4. Bachelor's degree in paralegal studies from institutionally accredited and/or ABA approved school AND at least 2 years of substantive paralegal experience
5. Cannot be convicted of a felony or comparable crime
6. Cannot be currently under suspension, termination or revocation of a certificate, registration, or license to practice by a professional organization, court, disciplinary board or agency in any jurisdiction

ITEMS NEEDED FOR APPLICATION

1. Copy of college diploma (can be copied from framed diploma)
2. Copy of paralegal school certificate (can be copied from framed certificate)
3. Official college transcripts (must be ordered from college)
4. Official paralegal school transcripts (if separate from college attended and must be ordered from school)
5. Copy of marriage license if name was different in school
6. Letter of Reference from member of legal community-lawyer, judge or RP® (sample of letter attached) – *may need a couple if your years at the current firm doesn't meet the criteria*
7. Employment Verification letter (sample of letter attached)
8. PACE® Affidavit of Education and Work Experience Form (make a copy of this form and fill the copy in BEFORE you fill out the actual form from your application booklet)
9. Application
10. Examination fee (Application fee is now free and you can access the application online at www.paralegals.org. The examination fee for PACE® is \$225 for NFPA members/\$250 for non-NFPA members and the fee MUST be included with your application submission. Payments can be made by business check, money order, and Visa, Mastercard or American Express credit cards. Checks and money orders should be made payable to NFPA-PACE®.

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PCCE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. A bachelor's degree in any subject, a paralegal certificate, no experience or continuing legal education (CLE); OR
2. A bachelor's degree in paralegal studies or legal studies, no experience or CLE; OR
3. A bachelor's degree in any subject, no paralegal certificate, 6 months of experience and 1 hour of ethics taken in the year preceding the exam application date; OR
4. An associate's degree in paralegal studies or legal studies, no experience or CLE; OR
5. An associate's degree in any subject, a paralegal certificate, no experience or CLE; OR
6. An associate's degree in any subject, no paralegal certificate, 1 year of experience and 6 hours of CLE, including 1 hour of ethics taken in the year preceding the exam application date; OR
7. Active duty, retired or former military personnel qualified in a military operation specialty as a paralegal and 1.0 hour of Ethics CLE within the year preceding the exam application; OR
8. Candidates who are within two months of graduating and registered for the PCC Exam by a Director of a paralegal studies program participating in the PCCE Assurance of Learning (AoL) Program at the Partner level; OR
9. A paralegal certificate from a program that meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in NFPA's Short Term Paralegal Program Position Statement (see Appendix F for a copy of the position statement), 1 year of experience and 6 hours of CLE, including 1 hour of ethics taken in the year preceding the exam application date; OR
10. A high school diploma or GED, 5 years of experience and 12 hours of CLE, including 1 hour of ethics taken in the 2 years preceding the exam application date.

To complete the application, candidates will need to indicate their eligibility route, the education (both school and level) they received, their application status (first-time or retake) and whether they are requesting special testing accommodations. In addition, candidates will need to indicate their agreement to a certifying statement before the application can proceed. Finally, payment must be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express) at the time of application. The PCCE™ exam fee is \$215 and must be paid at the time the application is submitted.

NFPA/PACE CONTACT INFO

NFPA Headquarters, PACE® (or PCCE™) Application

One Parkview Plaza, Suite 800
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Phone Number: (847) 686-2247

Fax Number: (847) 686-2251

Email: info@paralegals.org

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****You should send your application off when you are ready to take the exam. Once NFPA receives your application, they will send you a letter or email from PES advising you that you are a successful candidate to sit for PACE®/PCCE™. You have 90 DAYS from the date on that letter or email to schedule a date and time at the nearest Prometric/Sylvan testing center.**

Once you have scheduled your date and time, take a test drive to the center at that same time and day (for example, Saturday at 8:00 am) to see how traffic is, if there is construction, etc...). You have to arrive early for the test, so don't cut it close! Be prepared to arrive at least 15-30 minutes early. The Testing Center people will start going through the roll of names early to see what exam you will be taking. There will be all kinds of exams going on at the same time (medical, accounting, etc...); all the people there with you at the center will not all be taking PACE® or PCCE™.

You will be taken back to the computers and they are set up in rows with each computer divided in a cubicle to cut down on cheating. The center is very strict about cheating; therefore you are not allowed to take anything in the exam with you. You can put all your belongings in a locker and take the key with you. The lockers are small, so don't take a whole lot of items. You check in with the desk right outside the computer room and they will give you a scrap piece of paper and a pencil. At any time during the test, you may get up and go to the restroom or take a break, but you will need to sign out at the desk and when you come back, you must sign back in again. You are given up to 4 hours for the test. It goes quicker than you think...manage your time wisely.

The test:

Test Anxiety:

If you have test anxiety, take a deep breath before you start the test. Don't let your nerves get you all stressed out. You need to be clear-headed for the test.

Tutorial:

You do have the option to take a tutorial-DO IT!! It will tell you important things you need to know about how to bypass questions you can't answer right away and want to go back to, how to go through the test- *taking the Tutorial will help ease anxiety b/c it gives you some time before the test to calm down and you will spare yourself from any technical issues that would cause additional anxiety.*

Answering questions:

If you can't answer something immediately, read back through it one more time. *Answer to the best of your ability b/c not answering and not having time to go back will be*

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counted wrong – if answer comes to you later, you can come back to the bookmark, and answer it then. If you are having trouble with the questions, keep in mind that the same question could be asked somewhere else on the test or the answer may be 20 questions later in a different question. The questions are all multiple-choice and are weighted differently. Some are very easy and some you just will not know. Most are questions you can answer but require some thought process and eliminating choices.

The way that PACE® is structured is that the test questions were written by paralegals for paralegals. Out of 4 possible answers, you will have an obvious throwaway answer that you know is wrong, one that would be right but it is missing key wording, a detractor which is an answer that looks right but is not, and then the right or best answer. Get rid of your obviously wrong answers first. Then look at your detractor and your right answer and see which one answers the question best. **THE PACE® IS ABOUT WHICH IS THE BEST ANSWER TO THE QUESTION.** There may be an answer that is correct in and of itself, but is not the best answer to the question being asked. Just keep in mind that the test is looking for the basic and bare minimum-what protections your office does to cover itself may be above and beyond what the law **REQUIRES** so if the test asks for the bare minimum and you give the answer as above and beyond when the bare minimum answer was an option, that would be an incorrect answer. This is very important to keep in mind for the ethics portion of the test. The ethics portion may ask the same question over and over again, but in different ways. You need to know how to answer situational ethics questions. The test is not divided into sections-it is just 200 questions in random order. You may start with a corporate question, then ethics, then bankruptcy, then ethics, then family law, etc...there is no set order to the questions. There is a set ratio of the domains. Do not discuss specific questions on your tests with other study group members. It is ok to give them a general idea of the difficulty or ease of the test for you and what general areas were tested on, but please do not disclose any test questions verbatim.

The way the PCCE™ is structured is that the test questions were written by paralegals for paralegals. Out of 4 possible answers, you will have an obvious throwaway answer that you know is wrong, one that would be right but it is missing key wording, a detractor which is an answer that looks right but is not, and then the right or best answer. Get rid of your obviously wrong answers first. Then look at your detractor and your right answer and see which one answers the question best. **HOWEVER, THE PCCE™ IS ABOUT DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY AND ACTS.** The PCCE™ contains a total of 125 multiple-choice questions with four choices. Candidates are allowed two and one-half (2½) hours to complete the exam. There are 110 scored questions and 15 unscored questions (pretest questions) that are randomly distributed throughout the test and not identified. The candidate's test score is based on the responses to the 110 scored questions. The 15 pretest questions are not counted

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in scoring and are used for statistical purposes only. Pretest questions are essential in building the bank of PCC Exam questions that are available for use on future exams. The use of pretest questions is a common practice in the certification arena. The scale score range for the PCCE™ exam is 300 to 700, with 550 set as the passing point. The questions are multiple choice and you need to know your definitions, acts, and Latin terminology inside and out. Make use of flash cards for this; it will be an easy way to memorize the terms and definitions. This exam will test you over the manual and outside resources as well, so incorporate your paralegal textbooks into your studying. Use your notes from school. It is the same for PCCE™ as it is for PACE®. Do not discuss specific questions on your tests with other study group members. It is ok to give them a general idea of the difficulty or ease of the test for you and what general areas were tested on, but please do not disclose any test questions verbatim.

Also – you're given dry erase page and marker to take notes. This is what I used to write down the numbers of questions I wasn't 100% on.

Time management:

ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS be mindful of your time! Check the clock on your computer every 10th question or so to keep yourself aware of the remaining time on the test. You don't want to be in the middle of the test and checking the clock for the first time to find out you have 30 minutes left and you are only halfway through. It isn't meant to alarm you, but to keep you on track.

Once you have gone all the way through the test, go back and answer all unanswered questions. Again, look at your time and see where you are. Answer everything, even if you have to guess! You may guess right! It is ok to finish early and it is ok to finish with one minute to spare. We are all different types of test takers so don't beat yourself up over having to use the whole time and don't think you failed it if you finished in 2 hours. When you are sure you are done or when your time is up, click finish to complete the test. It will compute all your answers and then will give you a preliminary score before you leave the computer. Sit there and decompress from taking the test while you wait. Know that you did your best and whatever score you get is all you could do with the test you were given and the amount of study time you put in to this. It takes about 2-3 minutes to get your results and then it will tell you on the screen if you preliminarily passed or failed. If you passed, it will say "Congratulations! You have preliminarily passed..." It will give you a breakdown of how you did in each area of the questions (strengths/weaknesses) and will give you your score. There are 700 points on the PACE® and 110 points on the PCCE™ exams; the passing score is 550. If you do not pass, do not be discouraged. You can take it again, but must wait 6 months before reapplying. This will give you time to study the

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areas in which you showed weaknesses on the test. If you get very close to passing (546 or 548), it may change if some or one of the questions was contested and they decide to throw it out and give credit for it.

Prior to leaving the test center, candidates will receive a preliminary score report. These results are unofficial. Official score reports are generated by PES quarterly in accordance with the schedule provided below to provide statistical information for analysis by the Vice President and Director of Paralegal Certification and to confirm the preliminary exam results. In addition to a score report, passing candidates will receive a commemorative certificate from NFPA, approximately six to eight weeks after the official score report. The official score report and a certificate (if applicable) will be sent to the mailing address provided in your application, so make sure that you update your address if it has changed. Under no circumstances will scores or pass/fail information be released over the phone, via email or Internet, or by fax.

PCCE™ Exam Scoring Run Dates	
Date Candidate Tested	Scores Mailed from Prometric
January 1 – March 31	April 11
April 1 – June 30	July 11
July 1 – September 30	October 11
October 1 – December 31	January 11

If you passed, you will get a letter in the mail from NFPA with your card within 6-8 weeks from the date of the test. You may use your RP® designation once you receive this card from NFPA. Your designation will look like this:

PACE®:

**Jane Doe, RP®
NFPA/PACE® Registered Paralegal®**

OR

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PCCE™:

Jane Doe, CRP™

NFPA/PCCE™ Core Registered Paralegal™

****DO NOT USE IT UNTIL YOU RECEIVE YOUR CONFIRMED SCORING RESULTS FROM NFPA!
Your results from testing day are preliminary and answers may be contested and thrown out, so until you get verification from NFPA directly, don't use it.**